for "potato," each word indicating minutely determined combinations of potato qualities.[22]

Considering that 250 years ago the Comanches did not even know what a horse was, they very quickly built up a vocabulary for describing a horse on the basis of color. A horse was a brown (*ɖupsikʷma*), a light bay (*ohaieka*), a reddish brown (*ɛkakoma*), a black (*ɖuukʷma*), a white (*tɔsa*), a blue (*epixtuesi*), a dun (*maana*), a sorrel (*ɔɛkʷma*), or a roan, either red (*ekaesi*) or yellow (*ohaesi*). Then there was the *dunnia*, a yellow horse with black mane and tail. Pintos were red (*ɛkaɔnaco*), sorrel (*ɔdutsɔnaɔ*), or black (*ɖuu:-tsɔnaɔ*). And finally there were the red (*ɛkanaki*), yellow (*ohanaki*), and black (*ɖuunaki*) ears.

Most war ponies and race horses had personal names, while the ruck of a man's herd did not. A Comanche warrior would never be caught riding a mare if he could help it—they were for women and children—and under no circumstances would he ride a mare into battle. And while teen-agers might ride mares, a boy or girl dressed up for "show off" considered mares déclassé; only a sharp horse would do.

Riding horses were almost always gelded, for the Comanches became real pastoralists who knew how to breed up their stock. This drew from T. A. Dodge, U.S.A., the following comment: "In one particular the Comanche is noteworthy. He knows more about horses and horse-breeding than any other Indian. He is particularly wedded to and apt to ride a pinto ('painted' or piebald) horse, and never keeps any but a pinto stallion. He chooses his ponies well, and shows more good sense in breeding than one would give him credit for. The corollary to this is that the Comanche is far less cruel to his beasts, and though he begins to use them as yearlings, the ponies often last through many years."[23]

Only a few choice stallions were permitted to breed the mares. All others were castrated when about two years of age. The Comanche technique was to rope the forelegs, throw the stallion, and tie his front

[22] W. La Barre, "Potato Taxonomy of the Aymara Indians of Bolivia," *Acta Americana*, Vol. V (1947), 83–102.

[23] T. A. Dodge, "Some American Riders," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, May, 1891, 862.

3:Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945)1952
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feet to a post. Two men grabbed the hind legs, and the operator sat between the legs to do his cutting.[24]

Comanche horses were not ordinarily shod, but a man's favorite horse, if tenderfooted, was fitted with a rawhide boot soaked in water and tied over the sore hoofs.[25] Other riding horses had their hoofs toughened by walking them slowly back and forth near the heat and smoke of a fire.[26]

Among the Comanches, horses were private property. Each member of a family who was large enough to ride had one or more mounts of his own. The young child was usually given an old, gentle mare. The women had their riding mounts as well as mules and gentle horses for packing. Large numbers of mules were frequently found in the Comanche camps around the middle of the nineteenth century. Captives, before they were adopted into the tribe, were also forced to ride mules to lessen the danger of a break for freedom.

Josiah Gregg was of the opinion that the Comanches had a universal custom of marking their animals by a slit in the tip of each ear.[27] Contemporary Comanches deny this, however, saying that any Comanche could distinguish one horse from another by looks just as easily as he could tell one person from another. After all, the Comanches lived with their horses.

Most accounts by early explorers on the plains agree that the Comanches were among the best horsemen the world has produced. Baldwin Möllhausen, a German scientist and traveler who crossed the Southern Plains in 1853, observed that from earliest childhood to the last days of his life the Comanche was continually on horseback. "Indeed, he makes but an awkward figure enough on foot, though he is no sooner mounted than he is transformed; and when with no other aid than that of the rein and heavy whip he makes his horse perform the most incredible feats," which gave him a feeling of independence and superiority.[28] Marcy stated that it was while the Co-

[24] Informant: Post Oak Jim.

[25] Informant: Slope.

[26] H. H. Bancroft, *The Native Races*, I, 518, n.136; Parker, *op cit.*, 203.

[27] Josiah Gregg, *Commerce of the Prairies*, 433.

[28] Möllhausen, *op. cit.*, I, 184.